Covenant renewal service

An order and planning sheet for congregations
Vine & Lintel, fivepractices.org

The covenant renewal service, first held by John Wesley at Spitalfields in London on 11 August 1755, invites a congregation to give itself to God together, usually at the start of a new year. This sheet offers a simple order of service and space for planning. It does not reproduce the covenant prayer: use the form authorized in your own church's book of worship, or Wesley's 1780 text, which is in the public domain.

1. Gathering

Call to worship centred on God's faithfulness. Opening hymn of praise. Prayer of thanksgiving for the past year.

2. The Word

Suggested readings: Deuteronomy 29:10-15; Jeremiah 31:31-34; Romans 12:1-2; John 15:1-11. Sermon or reflection on what it means to belong to God.

3. Preparing to make the covenant

A short explanation of the history and meaning of the covenant, especially for visitors and newer members. Silence. A searching confession, naming ways the community and its members have failed to live as God's people. Words of assurance.

4. The covenant

The congregation stands, if able, and prays the covenant prayer together. Some congregations invite each person to sign and date a card with the covenant words and keep it through the year.

5. Holy Communion

Where this is the congregation's practice, the Lord's Supper follows as a sign of the covenant sealed in Christ.

6. Sending

A hymn of dedication, such as Charles Wesley's "Come, let us use the grace divine". Blessing and dismissal.

Planning

Date and time

Leaders and readers

Version of the covenant prayer used
(source and permission)

Hymns and music

Covenant cards printed (number)

Communion arrangements

Follow-up during the year (small
groups, service, giving)

Background: "Wesley's Covenant Prayer and the covenant renewal service", https://fivepractices.org/blog/105-wesleys-covenant-prayer-part-ii/. This sheet may be copied freely for use in congregations. Vine & Lintel is an independent publication, not affiliated with any denomination or with the original fivepractices.org project.